Theatre Appreciation

Theatre 161.003  Instructor: David Raine (office 218)
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MWF 11 am – 11:50 am  Phone: 936-468-1077

Required Texts:

- Oedipus Rex (or Oedipus the King) by Sophocles (free online)
- A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (may be found online)
- The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde (free online)

Course Objective: The intent of this course is to familiarize the student with one of the oldest and most vital arts forms in our culture. The student should complete the class having achieved a basic understanding of the Where, What, When and How’s of theatre as an art form. Most importantly, the course should help a student develop a critical appreciation of the art form.

D2L: This class has a web presence on D2L that we will use for turning in assignments. The address is http://d2l.sfasu.edu/ When you turn in your play performance critiques, you will be submitting them to the appropriate dropbox in D2L.

Grading: Grading will be determined by the following—

- 3 exams 50%
- 3 play quizzes 20%
- Play critiques 20%
- Participation/Behavior 10%
- 100%

Exams (50%): There will be three exams covering the textbook and lecture information. These exams will be a combination of question formats (multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank). If you miss an exam and can offer me a written medical excuse or some other documentation showing you missed the exam for a good reason, I will offer one day at the end of the summer session in which to make it up. Expect that make-up exam to be different from the original, and probably contain short-response and/or essay questions. The make-up exam for the last test is especially brutal. You have been warned.

Quizzes (20%): There will be three short quizzes over the three plays you will be required to read for class. These quizzes will be multiple choice and designed to test whether or not you have read the plays and seen the production.

You will need at least nine (8) Scantrons for this class. We use the 882-E Scantron (the long, skinny one). You can buy Scantrons at the various college bookstores. There are also vending machines in certain campus locations. You can obtain some for free on the second floor of the Student Center. You must use a pencil to fill out your Scantron, as a pen will cause our grading machine to count all your answers wrong.
Play Critiques (20%): You will be required to write play critiques of two productions. One of the critiques must be over *Biedermann and the Firebugs*, which you are required to attend. The second critique must be over one of the three offered Downstage productions (see below). You will be provided with a card to obtain your tickets free of charge. **DO NOT LOSE THIS CARD.** Treat it like money. If you lose the card, you’ll have to purchase your tickets. A handout with critique guidelines will be distributed, and what I expect from a critique will be discussed in class, but you will basically be giving me your opinion of the production, and explaining why you liked or did not like the elements of the production. Do not simply ignore this part of your grade. 20% is the difference in a letter grade. Attending the plays is probably the most important thing you will do in this class. If you know now that you cannot attend the plays, you should drop the class now and re-take it some other semester. You cannot “appreciate” theatre without attending plays. Being scheduled to work at your job at the last moment is not an excuse for not attending the plays. Do NOT expect any sympathy or mercy if you tell me at the end of the semester that you hadn’t been able to attend your plays. You will simply be missing that part of your grade.

*Biedermann and the Firebugs* will be performed from Tuesday, February 27th through Saturday, March 3rd. Start time for each performance will be 7:30pm. You must attend one of the performances of this play AND write a critique over the production. In addition to submitting this critique to the D2L dropbox, you will be required to also submit a copy to LiveText.

You must also see and critique ONE of the following Downstage productions:
- *Antigone in New York* (Fri. 2/23 at 7:30pm and Sat. 2/24 at 2pm and 7:30pm)
- *Haiku* (Fri. 3/23 at 7:30pm and Sat. 3/24 at 2pm and 7:30pm)
- *Nine* (Fri. 4/6 at 7:30pm and Sat. 4/7 at 2pm and 7:30pm)

Downstage critiques will be submitted to the D2L dropbox. Please make sure the document is in .doc, .docx, .pdf, or .rtf formats when you submit it. **DO NOT USE the .pages format that Mac software uses.** I cannot open those documents, and if you cannot submit in a different format, you will be required to provide me a printed copy in class and by the deadline.

Be advised that the department is very strict about the start time, so do not arrive late. At the listed start times they will close the doors and not permit anyone entry until the intermission. This will make your critique extremely difficult to do. In the case of the Downstage productions, there are no intermissions, so if you arrive late and find the doors are closed **DO NOT TRY TO ENTER.** The Downstage is a very small space, and if you come in after the show has started, you will find yourself on the stage. Give yourself plenty of time to arrive and find your seat prior to the above listed start time.

Participation/Behavior (10%): The participation grade consists of attending the required theatre productions during the semester, contribution to class discussions,
appropriate participation in class activities, regular attendance, and adherence to class rules.

**Late Assignments:** Do not expect me to accept them. Meet your deadlines.

**Extra Credit:** If you attend a **play** other than the two you are required to see for the course, and you bring me a ticket stub and program from that play, I will award you two points extra credit on your final grade. You may do this no more than twice. Attending extra Downstage productions will NOT count toward extra credit, as we simply don’t have enough seating.

Other plays will be staged during the semester at the Lamp Lite Theatre in Nacogdoches and Angelina College in Lufkin. High school plays will also count, as will professional productions of plays in Dallas or Houston. It must be a **play** with script and characters—not a music concert or recital. You must bring me a program from the play AND your ticket stub.

**Attendance Policy:** It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, and university sponsored events. Excused absences from class will only be granted upon presentation of **written documentation upon the first day of the student’s return from the teacher, sponsor, or physician involved.** It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor that he or she has scheduled the planned official absence.

Attendance will be taken every class. The attendance policy for this class is very simple. **A total of TEN unexcused and/or excused absences will result in a FAIL grade regardless of the earned grade.** There is no appeal to this policy, and YOU are responsible for knowing how many absences you have.

There will be no make-up work given (exam, quiz, or class assignment) unless a medical excuse or some other official documentation is presented to the instructor. “I was too tired”, “I overslept”, “I forgot”, etc. are not acceptable excuses.

**Being late for class:** Being habitually late for class is the height of irresponsibility, disrespect, rudeness, and the desire to earn the ill-will of the instructor. When you are late, you interrupt the class—both my teaching of it, and the other students’ participation in it. While it might be understandable for a student to have something happen that may make them slightly late for class once, having it happen several times is **not** understandable. Being habitually late tells me only one thing—you don’t care about this class. If something is important to you, you will not be late for it. If it’s important to you, you will plan to give yourself enough time to account for the unexpected. Nearly everyone in the class will already be doing that. If you are **not** doing that, and being late is just how you live your life, you have a serious problem that will extend far beyond attending college. A habit of never being on-time will make it very difficult for you to hold a job, and people in your life will come to think of you as undependable. **Being late to class three times will count as an absence. If you arrive to class after I have already taken the roll, it is YOUR responsibility to tell me you were late before you leave the class. Otherwise the absence I recorded will stand.**
Core Objectives:
1. Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
3. Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared goal or purpose.
4. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Student Learning Outcomes:
- Students will develop basic understanding of dramatic literature, dramatic theory and criticism, and performance from multiple perspectives (Obj. #1)
- Students will develop their abilities to analyze, write about, and discuss performance, both informally and through formal presentation (Obj. #1, 2)
- Students will learn functions of the various theatrical sub-disciplines and how they relate to each other in production, and the value and purpose of professional and artistic collaboration (Obj. #3)
- Students will learn a broad history of theatre from ancient to modern (Obj. #4)

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Any cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment or test will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and may, at the instructor’s discretion, result in failure of the course.

A special mention regarding your play critiques and plagiarism. When you write your play critiques, you are giving me your thoughts, ideas, and opinions only. You may not use anyone else’s thoughts, ideas, and opinions. You may not cite sources. You may not
slightly rearrange a critique written by one of your friends. You may not use anyone else’s words and thoughts but your own. Failure to do so will earn you a zero on the assignment, and in the case of blatant plagiarism I will probably fail you for the course right then and there. In college, plagiarism is a HUGE deal, folks.

**Withheld Grades:** Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

When it comes to “unacceptable behavior” in class, you may refer to the following:

**Being on your cell phone during class is disrespectful. It tells me that you don’t care about the class. It distracts other students around you. It marks you as an unserious student. Years of teaching have taught me that no matter what I say, I cannot stop you from texting or scrolling through your social media feeds, but I can see you, and it makes a real impression upon me.**

**The same reasoning applies to the use of laptops. I’m happy to have you take class notes on your laptop, but if you think I can’t figure out when you’re doing other**
things, you’re mistaken. It’s not difficult at all. And it make a real impression upon me.

No wearing of headphones or ear buds during class.

No food or drink in the classroom, with the exception of drinks in re-sealable containers (i.e. bottles with screw-on caps). Do not bring food of any kind. Eat before you come to class if you have to. We are guests in this building, and I don’t want to make a bad impression by leaving a mess.

Try very hard not to sleep in class. THIS INCLUDES VIDEO SHOWINGS. If you’re that exhausted, you should have stayed home. Also, if you snore, I’ll find some fun way to embarrass you.

Once you have started taking a quiz or an exam, you may not leave the classroom until you have completed it. If you leave the classroom prior to completing the quiz or exam, I will take it up, and you will be finished with it at that point.

No socializing while I’m trying to teach and others are trying to learn. If you are having conversations with your friends while the class is going on, I guarantee you are disturbing and probably angering students around you. You are interfering with what they are already paying way too much money for. If I ask you to stop talking and be quiet, please DO that. If you can’t stop having conversations with friends while class is going on, I’ll be happy to pretend we’re in the fourth grade, and assign you new seating for the remainder of the semester.

This class engages material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

Involuntary Withdrawal from Class: If you are involuntarily withdrawn from the class by the administration, they will send me (and I would assume you, as well) notification. It is your responsibility to clear up whatever led to the withdrawal, and get reinstated in the class. If you fail to do this, you are not supposed to be attending the class. If you tell me you fixed it but you actually didn’t, don’t expect to receive a grade at the end of the semester, even if you did all the work, because you won’t be enrolled in the class.